



Competencies

The ultimate goal of the Personnel System Reform Act is to improve services to the public through modification of the state's human resources (HR) rules, systems and processes. Research has shown that organizations can achieve significant productivity increases through effective implementation of integrated competency-based HR systems. Competencies are attached to positions and follow them through the HR system and processes. Competencies are used in recruiting, assessment and selection, development, performance management, rewards and compensation, and succession planning.

What are competencies? How are they different than KSAs?

Competencies are those measurable or observable knowledge, skills, abilities and other behaviors critical to success in a key job role or function.

Competencies encompass the more familiar "KSAs" (knowledge, skills and abilities), but are more powerful in that they emphasize a person's ability to produce an expected outcome. A competency is often a set of related KSAs that work together to produce key outcomes. In other words, excellent performance often cannot be understood only in terms of isolated knowledge, skills, or abilities. Rather, it results from a combination of these attributes working together.

How do organizations and employees benefit from using a competency-based system?

By providing a more holistic view of all the important attributes for success in a job, a competency approach will improve the understanding of what it really takes to perform well. Using competencies can create a foundation for high performance HR management programs to attract, develop and retain the talent needed to succeed.

How do you determine which competencies are most important to a job?

First determine which functions and duties are most critical to a position. Then determine which competencies are necessary for effective performance in those areas. This can be achieved through a job analysis process, typically facilitated by an organization's HR department.

What tools and resources are available to assist agencies and institutions?

The Department of Personnel is providing:

- A comprehensive master list of competencies for agencies and institutions to use
- Mapping of some competencies to occupations
- Web-based information and resources
- Training on competencies, determining them through job analysis, and their use
- Consultative assistance to employers in determining core competencies and mining position-specific competencies
- Mapping of training to some competencies

Will agencies/institutions be able to customize the competencies in the master list prepared by DOP? Will they be able to use their own?

Our goal is to have a comprehensive list of competencies available for agencies and institutions to use and customize as desired. We envision that agencies and institutions will be able to supplement it with their own competencies and definitions as well. The details regarding what this will look like in SAP (the new HR computer system) are being developed.

How might competencies be linked to human resources decisions impacting individual employees?

Competencies desired may be part of the recruiting process and candidates' competencies may be evaluated in screening, hiring and promotion decisions. In addition, competencies may be a factor in determining an employee's compensation. Development and use on the job of some competencies might result in assignment pay if an assignment pay reference exists in the compensation plan and is applied by the employer. Development and effective use on the job of key competencies could result in successful performance that may translate into performance recognition pay or an accelerated progression increase (if the employer is able to use these tools by having attained performance management confirmation).

Will training opportunities be "linked" to the competencies list?

We do plan to provide a crosswalk between competencies on the master list and DOP training opportunities that relate to those competencies. Full functionality will likely be possible in connection with SAP Release 2 in August 2005.
